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Samuel Miller's Sermons.



THE
*DIFFICULTIES AND TEMPTATIONS WHICH ATTEND THE
PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL IN GREAT CITIES:*

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

IN THE CITY OF BALTIMORE,

OCTOBER 19, 1820 ;

AT

The Ordination and Installation

OF

THE REVEREND WILLIAM NEVINS,

AS PASTOR OF SAID CHURCH.

BY SAMUEL MILLER, D. D.

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UNITED STATES, AT PRINCETON.

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THE following Discourse was delivered at the request of the Presbytery of Baltimore; and, in compliance with a vote of that Venerable Body, accompanied by a similar vote of the Session and Board of Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church of Baltimore, it is now committed to the press.

In consequence of a severe indisposition under which the preacher laboured, several parts of the First Head, and the whole of the Second, were omitted in the delivery. The whole is now submitted to the candour of the publick, with the hope and prayer that it may be in some degree useful.

Princeton, October 25th, 1820.

THE DIFFICULTIES AND TEMPTATIONS WHICH ATTEND
THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL IN GREAT CITIES :

A SERMON.

ROMANS i. 15, 16.

So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also : for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

It is not known when, or by whom, the Gospel was first preached in the city of Rome. Indeed the whole of the early history of the Church of Rome is involved in great obscurity; as if it had been expressly designed by infinite Wisdom, to discredit the claims of those who pretend to trace a regular descent, and to derive supreme ecclesiastical power, through the first Bishop of that Church. It was probably, however, one of the first planted of the Gentile churches; perhaps by some of those who were scattered abroad by the persecution which followed the death of Stephen; or possibly earlier than even this: for among those who heard the Apostle Peter preach on the day of Pentecost, and who were converted on that me-

morable occasion, are mentioned *strangers of Rome*. These Roman Jews, on their return home, would not fail to proclaim to others the same precious Gospel which they had heard in Jerusalem; and, we may suppose, were instrumental in making a number of converts to the Christian faith. It is highly probable that the Church of Rome was founded thus early; for the historian *Tacitus* tells us, that in the time of *Nero*, the Christians in that city were a “very great multitude:”^{*}—And when the Apostle wrote his Epistle to them, (which is generally supposed to have been about the year 57, or 58) *their faith*, we are informed, *was spoken of throughout the world*.

The city of Rome was now at the height of its glory. It was the Metropolis of the world:—the great centre of all that was refined, scientifick, splendid, luxurious, and fashionable in the whole Empire. There the wisdom of the wise, the power of the mighty, the magnificence of the rich and noble, and the licentious refinements of the sensual, held a sovereign and most imposing reign.

The Apostle Paul, at the date of this Epistle, had never been in Rome. He had, indeed, as he tells the Romans in this chapter, long earnestly desired, and often intended, to pay them a visit, but had been hitherto prevented. But he was still, as he intimates, ardently desirous of going, and intent upon it. *As*

* Annal. xv. 44.

much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also ; for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. As if he had said—"Notwithstanding all the splendour and luxury, and fashionable philosophy, and hostility to the religion of Jesus Christ, which I know reigns at Rome, I am ready to go thither, and bear my simple, humbling message. I am ready to go even to imperial Rome, though I am aware that the rich, the great, and the learned of that splendid Metropolis, will all be likely to be arrayed against me ;—still I am ready and desirous to go thither and preach the Gospel : for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

By the Gospel we are to understand the glad tidings of salvation by a crucified Redeemer. That wonderful message, which informs man that he is a guilty, depraved, and miserable sinner ; but which, at the same time, announces to him, that *there is redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace* :—which proclaims, that in consequence of the fall of the first Man, his posterity are, by nature, condemned, polluted, and utterly unable to deliver themselves ; but that *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not*

perish, but have everlasting life. That this eternal Son of God, equal with the Father in all Divine perfections, in the fulness of time, appeared in our world, in the nature and likeness of man; that in this mysterious union of very God and very man in the same glorious Person, He obeyed and suffered as the substitute of his people; that, as their Covenant-Head, He made a complete atonement for all their sins, and brought in everlasting righteousness for their justification; and that all who, from the heart, believe in Him, whosoever will accept of mercy, *whether Greek or Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, are washed and justified, and sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*; and shall be made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity.

This is that Gospel which shines in every page of Paul's Epistles; which he solemnly resolved to preach, and to preach nothing else; and which he was earnestly desirous of proclaiming in Rome.

I propose to embrace and illustrate the leading thoughts implied in our text, in the following propositions.

I. There are PECULIAR DIFFICULTIES and TEMPTATIONS which attend the preaching of the Gospel in GREAT CITIES;—and

II. It is of PECULIAR IMPORTANCE that the Gospel BE plainly and faithfully preached in such places.

I. There are PECULIAR DIFFICULTIES and TEMPTATIONS which attend the preaching of the Gospel in GREAT CITIES.

It is not my purpose, at present, to speak of the difficulties and temptations which attend the Gospel Ministry in general, and every where ; but of those alone which may be considered as, in some degree, PECULIAR to great cities.

And, in entering on this branch of the subject, I need not say, that human nature is the same, both in city and country ; and that the same general virtues and vices are to be found in both. But it can scarcely, I think, be doubted, that particular circumstances in both, are productive of appropriate effects, and confer upon the state of society in each an appropriate aspect. There is, if I mistake not, a sort of intensity of character imparted to the inhabitants of great cities ; an intensity generated and nourished, by the almost constant intercourse of persons of like taste and employment, and by the unceasing stimulants which such intercourse is calculated to apply. In no places on earth, assuredly, do we find such extremes of character ; such exalted virtue, and diabolical vice ; such fervent piety, and daring profaneness ; such noble generosity, and sordid selfishness, as in great cities. We are told, that, in the land of our fathers, the phrase, "*London piety*," is often employed to express the highest degree of

heavenly-mindedness ; and “ *London vice*,” the most degrading and shocking depravity. We may apply the same remark, with some degree of propriety, to every great city. Cities are commonly the grand theatres on which both the good and the bad display their greatest energies. Now, as in all society, the bad form by far the larger part ; and as their follies and vices are heightened by the circumstances in which they are placed in a great city ; there, of course, we must expect to find, in its most concentrated virulence, whatever is hostile to the purity and simplicity of the gospel, and whatever is opposed to the success and the enjoyment of a Gospel Minister.—But to be more particular.

1. The accumulated WEALTH, and the consequent LUXURY and DISSIPATION of a great City, form a serious obstacle to the plain and faithful preaching of the Gospel.

If wealth were *generally* employed, as *some* pious individuals have employed it, to promote the spread of the Gospel, and the happiness of mankind ; it would indeed be a real blessing, and its increase highly to be desired. But, alas ! in this depraved world, how seldom is wealth thus employed ! It is too commonly made to minister to the vanity and the lusts of its possessors ; and thus becomes a curse both to them, and to all around them. But in great Cities, where many wealthy individuals are brought

together, and where the principle of competition and display maintains such a peculiarly powerful influence ; there the “ pomps and vanities of the world” hold an almost undisputed reign. There magnificent houses, grand equipages, splendid dress, and expensive entertainments, form, with multitudes, the ambition, and the business of life. There the unceasing effort of many, to rival those above them, to outstrip equals, and to dazzle inferiours, is the grand object, which keeps up the constant fever of anxious pursuit.

While splendid living is the idol of one class, various kinds of amusement, commonly called pleasure, employ and corrupt a much larger class. The theatre—the card-table—the dance—the midnight revel, and every form of dissipation, are summoned to their aid to kill time, or to season the insipidity of sober life. Amusements are multiplied, and combined, and varied, and reiterated, until they become the chief, and, with many, the sole employment. And even some of those who are not engaged in these pursuits themselves, are so connected by various ties with those who are, that they cannot escape the contagious influence. Cast an eye, my friends, over any populous city, and say whether the picture is not below rather than above the reality.

Now, need I say, that all this is directly contrary to the spirituality and self-denial of the Gospel ? Need

I say, that a person who walks in such a course, even though he be a stranger to gross vices, cannot be a disciple of Jesus Christ? No, brethren, as long as the BIBLE is our guide, it is impossible to decide otherwise. And I have sometimes thought that there is no class of persons more difficult to be approached and impressed by a Minister of Christ, than your genteel, decent worshippers of luxury and fashion. We cannot denounce them as immoral, in the popular sense of the term; and they are apt to imagine that they are *saints* because they are not *profligates*. As long as this impression remains, there is no hope of their being profited by any thing we can say. With what an anxious and trembling heart, then, must a Minister of the Gospel go to proclaim his message in a place where such society abounds! He needs not only all his fortitude as a man, but also all his confidence as a believer, and all the gracious aid promised by the Master whom he serves, to support and animate him in the undertaking. He, of course, takes no pleasure in delivering an unwelcome or offensive message, as such; but would much rather, if it were possible, please all his hearers. How painful the task, then, to go to the tribes of vanity and frivolity, however elevated in their own estimation, and address them plainly and faithfully, as Paul would have done, on the sinfulness and danger of their course! How hard to natural feeling, to go to those who, it may

be, a few days or hours before, caressed him, and perhaps loaded him with civilities at the hospitable table, and tell them, that *except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God* ; that *he that believeth not on the Son of God, shall not see life, but that the wrath of God abideth on him* ; that we must *not be conformed to this world* ; but must *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godlily in this present evil world* !—O, what a temptation is here to soften or keep back the truth ! What a temptation to avoid dwelling on those great practical, Gospel doctrines, which he knows are so grating and offensive to many of his hearers !

But, alas ! even this temptation, fearful as it is, is not the whole of his danger. It will be well if, besides softening or keeping back the truth, he be not gradually and insensibly drawn to adopt in his own person and family, those very worldly habits, against which he was bound to have lifted up both his voice and his example. It will be well, if, instead of being a faithful reprover of prevailing vanities and follies, he be not, in effect, their daily patron. There is, I am persuaded, no harder trial of a Minister's graces, than to mingle continually with the members of a wealthy, polished, and fashionable congregation, and at the same time to *keep himself unspotted from the world*. Truly it requires the firmness, as well as the prudence of an Apostle, to be surrounded

with the spirit of conformity to the world, and yet, without giving just offence, to have no fellowship with it : to be continually solicited by worldly blandishments ; and yet to maintain that holy elevation of sentiment and conduct which becomes an “ *Overseer of the flock,*” a “ *steward of the mysteries of God.*”

2. The REFINEMENTS OF PHILOSOPHY, falsely so called, which are apt to reign, in a peculiar degree, in great and polished cities, are unfriendly to the preaching, and the success of the Gospel.

A variety of circumstances concur in drawing to large cities, a greater number, not only of the truly learned, but also of vain pretenders to knowledge, than are commonly found in other situations. In great cities, men of both these descriptions, are most apt to find appropriate society, and appropriate employment. There they find excitement, and gratification, and scenes in which to display their talents, or their vanity. Of course, places of this kind are generally found to be the favourite theatres of their association and enterprise.

But need I remark, that persons of this character are peculiarly apt to be found arrayed against the simplicity and purity of the Gospel ? Not that I suppose genuine philosophy to be unfriendly to the religion of Jesus Christ. The real and profound science of such men as *Bacon*, and *Boyle*, and *Newton*, and

Locke, and many more, demonstrated that knowledge, in itself, is a handmaid to religion ; a friend to faith. But the pride of knowledge, and the speculations of false science, are diametrically opposed to the humility and simplicity of the Gospel. They are perpetually disposed to wage, a concealed, perhaps, but real, and malignant warfare, against the Spirit, and all the distinguishing and most precious doctrines of Christianity. For example, the doctrine of the Divine existence in a Trinity of Persons, that fundamental doctrine in the system of Redemption :—The doctrine of the fall and ruin of our race in *Adam*, our federal head and representative ; without which I will venture to say, both the language and the offers of the plan of mercy are unintelligible :—The doctrine of atonement, by the vicarious sufferings, and of justification, by the imputed righteousness of the Surety, which may be said to be the life and glory of the Gospel :—And, finally, the doctrine of Regeneration, and of progressive sanctification, by the power of the Holy Spirit, *without which no man shall see the Lord*—are all doctrines which the spirit of false and vain philosophy regards with aversion, if not with contempt. When, therefore, a Minister of the Gospel goes to a place where large numbers of those who possess this spirit are collected and embodied, must he not, of necessity, meet with peculiar obstacles, and with peculiar temptations ? If, indeed, he will con-

sent to betray his Master with a kiss, and to *preach another Gospel*, all will be quiet ; this kind of opposition will totally cease. But he dare not do it. If he would *save himself and them that hear him*, he must not think, for one moment, of such complicated treachery.

This consideration appears to have deeply impressed the mind of Paul, in the prospect of going to Rome. He was perfectly aware that the proud philosophers of that great Capital would regard with disdain a man, who came to them preaching salvation in the name of a despised Jew, who had been crucified at Jerusalem as a malefactor ; and preaching a salvation, too, which in all its features was adapted to abase human pride. He was sensible that he must go, calculating and contented, to be reckoned a fool and a madman, for coming with such a message to men who accounted themselves more wise than the rest of mankind. So he had found it in the polished and learned *Athens* ; so he had found it in the proud, luxurious *Corinth* ; and so he expected to find it, wherever he went among the great ones of the world. And, let me add, brethren, so must every Ambassador of Christ expect to find it in every age and clime, if he resolve to preach the Gospel of the grace of God, in all its plainness and primitive simplicity. He must calculate on being regarded by the vain, the conceited,

the proud, the self-righteous, wherever he finds them, as a weak, prejudiced, sour, puritanical enthusiast : and it will be well if he be not loaded with still more opprobrious names. But he must be willing to encounter all this, and more, for the sake of his Master. He must be ready to say, with the same Apostle, who penned the words of our text—*We are counted fools for Christ's sake : We are made as the filth of the world, and as the offscouring of all things. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus.*

3. Another difficulty and temptation in the way of a city pastor, closely allied to the last which was mentioned, is—That, in polished and fashionable society, there is always a peculiar demand for SMOOTH and SUPERFICIAL PREACHING.

It is not only the spirit of proud philosophy that is hostile to the Gospel. The spirit of luxury, and worldly refinement is equally so ; and is often a more dangerous foe for being more plausible and insidious. The votaries of pleasure and ambition delight in that kind of preaching which will not disturb them in their unhallowed course. They say, “ *Prophecy to us smooth things.*” The more a sermon is decorated with the charms of a splendid rhetorick ; the more it contains of the *enticing words of man's*

wisdom, and the less of plain, and pungent Gospel truth, the better adapted it is to their taste. In short, they will not fail to be pleased with a preacher, who gratifies their fancy with brilliant imagery and language, and their ears with fascinating tones, and says little or nothing to make them displeased with themselves.

Search Christendom over, my friends, and you will find this to be one of the grand temptations in preaching the Gospel to the luxurious and fashionable, especially in large cities. And, alas! how many ministers who set out with the purpose and promise of being faithful, have fallen into the snare! They have begun, perhaps, with that most vain and delusive of all calculations, (for such I verily believe it to be) that the doctrines of the Gospel are never so likely to find their way to the hearts of the gay and the worldly, as when they are covered and disguised with artificial ornament. Hence they have insensibly contracted the habit of preaching,—the truth, perhaps,—but truth so gilded over,—so loaded with ornament,—so studiously divested of every thing adapted to give it edge and effect, as to be little if any better than keeping it back. This kind of preaching is greatly admired by the people of the world; but it leaves the pious to starve and mourn. It excites no alarm. It produces no complaint, on the part of the unbelieving and impenitent. It allows every hearer, who is so

disposed, to slumber in security ; and is adapted, ultimately, to make those who stately attend upon it, Christian in name, but heathen in reality.

Such have been the guilty course, and the fatal influence, of many a polished, courtly preacher, from the age of *Paul of Samosata** to the present hour. If you doubt the fact, search with impartiality the records of *Jerusalem* and *Antioch*, of *Carthage* and *Alexandria*, of *Constantinople* and of *Rome* ; and you will doubt no longer.

But, from a courtly, flattering mode of preaching, the transition is easy and natural to erroneous opinions. And, accordingly, great cities have commonly

* *Paul of Samosata*, was so called from the place of his birth. He was the Bishop of *Antioch*, about A. D. 260. Queen *Zenobia*, who then reigned in *Syria*, had a great esteem for him, on account of his eloquence, though she preferred the Jewish religion to all others. *Paul*, being a great courtier, in order to gain the favour of the queen, and to win her over to the Christian faith, endeavoured to accommodate his system of doctrine, and his mode of preaching to her taste. He denied the doctrine of the Trinity, as held by the orthodox, and also the proper Divinity of Christ ; and took great pains to add new splendour to the publick worship of his church. He at first attempted to conceal, or explain away his opinions, and gave much trouble to the clergy of his time and neighbourhood ; but was, at length, detected, and deposed from the ministry. See the accounts given of this man and his errors, by *Eusebius*, *Athanasius*, *Nicephorus*, *Theodoret*, *Chrysostom*, &c.

been, in all ages, the hot-beds of error. Because there have been displayed most frequently the pride of intellect, and those splendid temptations which are apt to *beguile from the simplicity that is in Christ*. In the great cities of the Roman Empire began that clerical ambition, which invaded the primitive parity of Gospel Ministers, and which finally issued in the Papal usurpation. In great cities, likewise, or, at least, in states of society similar to what is commonly found in such places, has generally commenced that fatal decline from orthodoxy, which began, perhaps, with calling in question some of what are styled the more rigid peculiarities of received creeds, and ended in embracing the dreadful, soul-destroying errors of *Arius or Socinus*.* We might easily illustrate and confirm this position, by examples drawn from our

* The above language, concerning the destructive nature of the *Arian* and *Socinian* heresies, has not been adopted lightly; but is the result of serious deliberation, and deep conviction. And in conformity with this view of the subject, the Author cannot forbear to notice and record a declaration made to himself, by the late Dr. *Priestley*, two or three years before the decease of that distinguished Unitarian. The conversation was a free and amicable one, on some of the fundamental doctrines of religion. In reply to a direct avowal on the part of the Author that he was a *Trinitarian* and a *Calvinist*, Dr. *Priestley* said—"I do not wonder that you Calvinists entertain and express a strongly unfavourable opinion of us Unitarians. The truth is, there

own country, had we time to trace the history of several sects among us, and especially of American Unitarianism. But I forbear to pursue the illustration farther : and shall only take the liberty to ask, as I pass along—How it is to be accounted for, that the preaching of those who deny the Divinity and Atonement of the Saviour, and who reject the doctrines of Human Depravity, of Regeneration, and of Justification by the righteousness of Christ—How, I ask, is it to be accounted for, that such preachers, all over the world, are most acceptable to the gay, the fashionable, the worldly-minded, and even the licentious ? That so many embrace and eulogize their system, without being, in the smallest perceptible degree, sanctified by it ? That thousands are in love with it, and praise it ; but that we look in vain for the monuments of its reforming

“ neither can, nor ought to be, any compromise between us. If *you* are right, WE ARE NOT CHRISTIANS AT ALL ; and if *we* are “ right, YOU ARE GROSS IDOLATERS.” These were, as nearly as can be recollected, the words, and, most accurately, the substance of his remark. And nothing, certainly, can be more just. Between those who believe in the Divinity and Atonement of the Son of God, and those who entirely reject both, “ *there is a great gulph fixed,*” which precludes all ecclesiastical intercourse. The former may greatly respect and love the latter, on account of other qualities and attainments ; but certainly cannot regard them as CHRISTIANS, in any correct sense of the word ; or as any more in the way of salvation, than *Mohammedans* or *Jews*.

and purifying power ? I will not pretend to answer these questions ; but leave them to the consciences of those who believe, that the genuine doctrines of the Gospel always have had, and always will have, a tendency to promote holiness of heart and of life ; and that we must *all speedily appear before the judgment seat of Christ.*

The preacher then, who goes to a polite and luxurious capital, ought to be most vigilantly on his guard against the tendency and the influence of which I have spoken. He ought to be constantly aware of the difficulty and of the temptation before him : and while he endeavours to gratify, as far as is lawful, the taste for elegance and refinement in his publick services ; he ought, at the same time, so to preach as to be able, with truth, to say—*I preach Christ crucified, not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.*

4. A fourth obstacle to the success of Gospel ministers in populous cities, is the tendency of particular circumstances, in such places, to HARDEN THE HEART.

Of these circumstances I have only time, at present, to mention two—VIZ. FAMILIARITY WITH DEATH, and the FREQUENCY AND PUBLICITY OF GROSS VICES.

Few things have a greater tendency to impress and soften the heart, than Death, and the various attendants on the close of our earthly pilgrimage. The

coffin, the shroud, the funeral procession, and the open grave, all tend to inspire deep reflection and seriousness, in every man who has not become obdurate as a brute. Nay, the most abandoned profligate, and even the atheist, are compelled to be thoughtful while they stand over *the house appointed for all living*. Such, in fact, is the impression made, on the minds of most persons, by a death and a funeral, in those places in which occurrences of this kind are comparatively rare. But probably every one who has had an opportunity of making the observation, has remarked, that in large cities, where deaths and funerals, and sometimes large numbers of them, occur every day, they, in a great measure, cease to make the impression which is proper and desirable. The scene is familiar. The mind becomes, in this respect, hardened. And that whole train of motives which the Gospel preacher is wont to draw from the consideration of death and eternity, and which ought to be among the most awfully powerful, make, for the most part, but little impression.

The same general remarks may be applied to gross vices. In the retirement of the country, where such vices seldom occur, and when they do occur, are in a great measure concealed from publick view, they are regarded with a kind of instinctive horror. But, in great cities, where they occur every day, and sometimes every hour, and frequently court the publick

eye, they are, insensibly, regarded with less and less horror. And it will be well if the minds of many, who once thought themselves beyond the reach of such an effect, are not gradually poisoned by the contagious example. It will be well if practices once considered as unquestionably and highly criminal, be not, by and by, so familiar to the mind, as to appear scarcely criminal at all, and as hardly a proper object of ecclesiastical discipline.

Now, it cannot be questioned, that whatever hardens the heart—whatever renders death and eternity less impressive, and sinful practice, of whatever kind, less abhorrent to the soul, forms a real obstacle to the success of the Ambassador of Christ. It can scarcely, I think, be doubted, that this was one of the difficulties which the Apostle contemplated in the prospect of preaching the Gospel at Rome. There, he knew, that many of those practices which he must denounce as unchristian, were not only loved, but sanctioned by publick opinion, and by general habit. But in spite of this, and of every other obstacle, he declared himself ready to go forward ; ready to put his reputation, and even his life in jeopardy, to plead the cause of his Master against all opposition.

5. The only other peculiar difficulty which I shall mention, as attendant on the labours of a Minister of the Gospel in a great city, is that LOVE OF VARIETY, and that fondness for RELIGIOUS DISSIPATION,

if I may so speak, which are apt to prevail in populous places.

When a Minister is settled in a retired situation, or in a town where there is but a single church, and but seldom an opportunity of comparing the ministrations of others with his, he has, comparatively, an easy task. He is, in a great measure free from that peculiar pressure, which a very different state of things imposes on the city pastor. In great cities there is created a sort of morbid appetite for variety, and for an excessive quantity, as well as delicacy, of publick preaching. There is such an easy access to every sort of talent and manner, that it cannot fail of being extremely difficult for any one man to keep together, and to satisfy, a large congregation. If he hope to do it, he must not only preach the pure Gospel, with diligence and with power; but he must also labour, as far as is lawful, to give his people that variety and richness of matter, which may be adapted to the various tastes of those who attend on his ministry. He must labour, as our Lord expresses it, *like a good householder, to bring forth out of his treasure things new and old*. He must, as the Apostle, in writing to Timothy, exhorts—*He must give attention to reading, as well as to exhortation: he must meditate upon these things, and give himself wholly to them, that his profiting may appear unto all*.

But that love of variety, which is peculiarly strong

in the inhabitants of great cities, and which a city pastor must make peculiar exertions to consult, and, as far as is proper, to satisfy, is not the whole of his difficulty. There is also a tendency in large towns, where publick exercises of religion abound, and where some churches, of one denomination or another, are almost always open ; there is a tendency among many professors of religion, otherwise exemplary, by far too much to neglect the duties of the closet, and of the family, and to be almost perpetually engaged in attending on publick services. I am a warm friend, not only to a punctual attendance on the stated service of the house of God on the sabbath ; but also to an attendance on prayer-meetings, and other similar exercises, as Providence may afford an opportunity, in the course of the week. The person who has it in his power to attend such meetings, but has no taste for it, and seldom or never appears at them, gives too much reason to fear that if he have real religion at all, it is at a very low ebb in his soul. Nay, I have no doubt that, where the principle of piety is in a lively and growing state, such meetings will be regarded as a feast, and there will be a desire to enjoy them as often as is consistent with the other duties of the Christian life. But this desire may be, and often has been, indulged to excess ; especially by parents and heads of families. Many hasten from church to church, and from one social meeting to

another, until every hour on the sabbath, and every evening in the week, are employed in publick services. In fact, they seem to think that they serve God acceptably just in proportion to the number of publick exercises on which they can attend. This religious dissipation—for it really appears to me to deserve no better name—is productive of multiplied evils. It interferes, almost entirely, with that calm self-examination, and self-converse, which are so essential to a life of growing piety. It abridges, or prevents, in a most fatal degree, that faithful instruction of children and servants, which is indispensable to training up a family *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. And it tends to surcharge the mind with an amount of spiritual provision, which is never properly digested, or likely to be advantageously applied. The consequence is, that the young and rising generation, in such families, are never prepared by adequate training at home to hear the Gospel with profit. While those who are more advanced in life, taking little or no time for meditation and reading in private, do not grow as they ought in Scriptural knowledge, and remain but babes, while they ought to be *strong men in Christ*.

Hence arises what is alleged by many to be a fact, and what, I suspect, is really so ; that among the mass of the professors of religion in great cities, there is, commonly, less accurate and digested know-

ledge of Christian doctrine, than among an equal number of professors in the country. Not that there is less general intelligence, or less access to books, in the former than in the latter : but, on the contrary, more, usually, of both. But because there is more mixed society ; more of those distracting interruptions which multifarious society cannot fail to produce ; and, of course, less retirement, less religious reading, and less leisurely digestion of what is read and heard.

Now, it is perfectly obvious that all this is unfriendly both to the comfort and the success of a Christian pastor. Whatever has a tendency to interrupt or to abridge the exercises of retirement and devotion ; whatever has a tendency to prevent professors of religion from enjoying much deep, undisturbed converse with themselves, their Bible, and their God ; and whatever tends to interfere with the patient, laborious pursuit of family instruction, and family discipline, will always be found to have an equal tendency to increase the toil, and at the same time to diminish the fruit of a Minister's work : will render the closet a less edifying preparative for the sanctuary, and the parental mansion a less wholesome nursery for the church of God.

Such are some of the peculiar difficulties and temptations, which beset the Ambassador of Christ in a great city ; and which either hinder his suc-

cess, or increase his labour, or tempt him to employ unhallowed means for avoiding the trouble which they induce.

It cannot be necessary to add, that, these things being so, the situation of a city-minister is, by no means to be coveted or envied. If he have a more comfortable temporal support than usually falls to the lot of his country brethren (though this is by no means always the case, and perhaps more seldom than is imagined, when every thing is taken into the account); and if he enjoy the advantage of more intelligent society, and of greater literary privileges; he has, at the same time, if he be faithful, more severe labour; more perplexing care; more distracting interruptions from unprofitable company; less command of his time, for either study or devotion; and less ministerial comfort. He is like a soldier, who is not only always on duty; but always in the front of the battle; often on the forlorn hope; and if he be sometimes cheered with the voice of approbation, and the shout of victory, he is, perhaps, still more frequently assailed by the murmurs of complaint, and discouraged by the fruitlessness of his toils.

I have dwelt so long on this branch of the subject, that less time than I could wish is left for considering the second proposition, which is

II. That, as peculiar difficulties and temptations

attend the preaching of the Gospel in great cities ; so it is of PECULIAR IMPORTANCE THAT THE GOSPEL BE PLAINLY AND FAITHFULLY PREACHED IN SUCH PLACES.

It is of unspeakable importance that the Gospel be plainly and faithfully preached every where. *For it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth.* If the salvation of the soul be of infinite moment ; if the Gospel of the grace of God be the only message of life and peace to fallen man ; and if *he that believeth this Gospel hath life, but he that believeth it not, shall not see life, but hath the wrath of God abiding on him ;*—then no tongue of men or of angels can tell the importance of preaching the Gospel, in its simplicity and purity, to every creature.

But the thought which I wish to illustrate and enforce is, that there are some considerations which render it PECULIARLY important that the Gospel be plainly and faithfully preached in GREAT CITIES. Among many which might be suggested, I will only request your attention to the following.

If there be any justness in the remark offered in a former part of the discourse, that there is a certain *intensity of character* usually observable among the inhabitants of great cities ; that, especially, their luxury and dissipation, their follies and vices are, in common, more strongly marked, than in the more

spare population of the country ; then it follows that there is, humanly speaking, more NEED of the Gospel in the former than in the latter : a more imperious call for exhibiting, in all its solemnity and power, that most potent of all means for opposing and subduing the depravity of man. It is a maxim, among wise physicians, that the most strongly marked diseases, call for the most bold and vigorous treatment. To counteract a poison of peculiar virulence, remedies of the most active character must be employed. So it is in the moral and spiritual world. Where difficulties more than commonly powerful and obstinate exist, remedies of corresponding potency ought to be sought and diligently applied. Since, then, the Gospel of Christ exhibits the only adequate remedy for human depravity and misery, it ought to be preached with peculiar plainness, fidelity and perseverance, wherever the diseases which it is intended to heal reign with more than ordinary malignity.

Again ; it is of peculiar importance that the Gospel be faithfully and powerfully preached in great cities, because *there* it is commonly addressed to GREATER NUMBERS AT ONCE than in more retired places. There the preacher has a more favourable opportunity of doing good upon a large scale : and, of course, the result of a given amount of labour, other things being equal, will be likely to be more extensively useful. When *Peter* preached at Jeru-

salem, and *Paul* at *Antioch* and *Corinth*, they seem to have accomplished more by single sermons, than by many, in the smaller settlements which they visited.

A large city, likewise, forms, as it were, the heart, the most vital portion of the State or Country to which it belongs. It gives fashion, and almost law, to the surrounding districts. A favourable impression made here, will be extended in every direction. A happy impulse given here, will vibrate, and be beneficially felt to the remotest bounds of the social body. How important, then, that in the Metropolis of a State or Nation, the truth be known and honoured, and orthodox churches established and edified ! How peculiarly desirable, that in such a great centre of action and of influence, there be able, faithful men, well qualified to be guides of the faith and practice of those around them !

Further ; in a great city, there is special need of instructive, faithful preaching, because there, as you have heard, there is apt to be less reading, less retired devotion, less patient use of the private means of growing in scriptural knowledge, than are commonly found in other places, where the means of grace are statedly enjoyed. It often happens, in large cities, that the instructions given from the pulpit, form the greater part of what many professors of religion and others, ever receive. Of what unspeak-

able importance is it, then, that the preaching, in such circumstances, be plain, clear, sound, able, faithful, and edifying ! How important that preachers be scribes, *well instructed in the kingdom of God ; qualified rightly to divide the word of truth, and give to every one his portion in due season !*

In a large city, moreover, the faithful, popular preacher will, almost every sabbath, address a number of strangers, who flock to the Metropolis, on business or pleasure, from every part of the surrounding country ; and who, if they be benefited themselves by his labours, will carry with them a portion of the sacred treasure, wherever they sojourn, or wherever they abide. When *Peter* preached in *Jerusalem*, on the day of Pentecost, he was the instrument of saving benefit to many who resided in almost every part of the Roman Empire. Some of the inhabitants of *Egypt* and of the *Lesser Asia*, of *Crete* and *Arabia*, of *Rome* and of *Parthia*, were found together, drinking in the Word of life from his lips ; and each, afterwards, going to his own home, we may suppose, became a means of saving knowledge to many around him. O how animating, and, at the same time, how solemn, is this thought to one who, from sabbath to sabbath, proclaims the message of salvation in a populous city ! Every time he enters the pulpit, he will, perhaps, preach to some who never heard him before, and will never hear

him again ; and who may carry away an impression eternally beneficial or injurious, according to its character, not only to themselves, but also to many others over whom they may exert an influence !

Finally ; in a large city, as we have seen, there is generally collected a much greater amount of intellectual power, of literary acquirement, and of pecuniary means, than are to be found in other places. Of course, if a right direction be given to publick sentiment by the faithful preaching of the Gospel (and we cannot hope that it shall be given by any other means) we may expect to see a much greater amount of talent, of learning, of wealth, and of exertion devoted to the cause of the Redeemer, to the promotion of human happiness, than could otherwise be reasonably expected. The servant of Jesus Christ, then, who *takes the oversight in the Lord* of a large and wealthy city congregation, may consider himself as called to preside over the movements of an Engine of mighty power, which, under wise guidance, may accomplish more than can easily be estimated ;—not for his own personal aggrandisement ;—not to gratify the littleness of sectarian bigotry ;—but to support and extend those great plans for building up the church of God, at home and abroad, which now do honour to those who engage in them, and which will promote the happiness of unnumbered millions in time and eternity.

It is plain, then, that the labours of a Gospel Minister, in a great capital, are more important than those of most others in the sacred office :—That greater benefits, or greater mischiefs are likely to flow from them, according to their character :—And that, as he is called to struggle with many peculiar and most painful difficulties ; so he has, also, peculiar inducements to be faithful, and may expect peculiar rewards for his fidelity.

This subject appears to me to be replete with instruction both to our young Brother, who is this day to be invested with the sacred office ; and also to that portion of the inhabitants of this great city, who are statedly to attend on his ministrations.

FIRST ; let me apply the remarks which have been made to the youthful Candidate, whose investment with the office of an Ambassador of Christ, and whose pastoral charge over this people, are this day to begin. My beloved Brother ! the great Head of the Church has cast your lot in a most important and interesting station. He has been pleased to place you on one of the most conspicuous hills of Zion. You have heard of the difficulties and temptations which will attend you. Contemplate them without self-flattery, but, at the same time, without dismay. They are real. They are formidable. Nay, the half has not been told you. Allow one who himself resided more

than twenty years in a large city, to speak with some degree of confidence on this subject. Rely upon it, the splendour of wealth, the fascinations of refined and elegant society, the charms of luxury, the caresses of respect and kindness, and the insinuating voice of popular applause are more truly dangerous to a Minister of Christ, than the terrors of persecution. More dangerous to his ministerial fidelity,—more dangerous to his ultimate peace. Turn not away, I beseech you, from a distinct view of this danger ; but, in the name and in the strength of your Master, regard it with a steady eye, and as *a good soldier of Jesus Christ*, gird on your armour.

Preach the simple and pure Gospel. Be not ashamed of it ; though the children of gaiety and dissipation call you rigid, and even fanatical ; and though the self-righteous and philosophical consider the cross as folly ;—be not ashamed of it. Let your resolution be that of Paul—*For I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. Whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, hold forth the word of life.* Hold it forth, without disguise or concealment ; in all its majesty and purity ; in all its humbling and elevating character. And be careful not only to PREACH THE GOSPEL ; but also to LIVE THE GOSPEL. Let all your deportment be a living, striking comment on the holy, humbling, and self-denying doctrine which you will

preach. Remember, that, not only every sermon you deliver, but every word you utter, and every part of your example, on this hill of Zion, will be of peculiar importance ; nay, perhaps, will be *for the rise or fall of many in Israel*. Let them all, then, (more I cannot say, and more I need not say) let them all be *such as becometh the Gospel of Jesus Christ*.

In pursuing this course, you will gain with all, and lose with none. It is a common opinion, that when a Minister of Christ is in the company of the gay and the worldly, he conciliates their respect by as much conformity to their practices as decorum will permit. There never was a greater mistake. I grant, that, by pursuing this course, he may conciliate their prevailing TASTE and their present WISHES ; BUT NOT THEIR JUDGMENT, or their RESPECT. They never fail to *think* the less of him, at the time, for all his concessions to their habits of life ; and seldom fail to *speak* of it to his disadvantage when he has withdrawn. No ; the judgment and the conscience of every worldly man, nay, of the most profligate man in this city, are strongly in favour of a pure, holy, retiring, self-denied character on the part of Ministers of the Gospel. When such a character is exhibited, it invariably extorts even from the most licentious, the homage of respect and admiration : and they are among the first to remark with severity on every departure from it. Be assured, then, that

a Minister of the Gospel, by every act of conformity to the maxims and manners of the world, loses in the estimation of the worst of men, and grieves to the heart the generation of the righteous.

When I think of your ministry in this place, my dear young Brother, I am ready fondly to hope that we may apply to you the same exhortation, and the same encouragement, which were given by the Saviour himself to the Apostle *Paul*, when he was about to preach in the city of *Corinth*. *Be not afraid*, said the ascended Redeemer ; *Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace ; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee ; for I have much people in this city.* *Acts xviii. 9, 10.* So, in my Master's name, I would say to you. *Be not afraid ; but speak, and hold not thy peace ; for the Lord is with thee.* Be faithful ; for the Lord, I trust, has much people in this city. *Be faithful unto death, and thou shalt receive a crown of life.* Remember that the true honour of a Gospel Minister consists, not in receiving greetings in the markets, or in being invited to the uppermost rooms at feasts, or in being called of men, *Rabbi, Rabbi.* No ; his honour consists in DOING GOOD ; his laurels are CONVERSIONS ; the highest eulogium that can be bestowed upon him is that which is recorded of a Minister of old—*He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and much people was added to the Lord.*

Remember, also, the shortness and uncertainty of life ; and endeavour every sabbath to preach, and every day to live, as if it might be your last. O what an affecting comment on this counsel is the early removal of that precious young Minister of Christ, who, not long since, proclaimed his Master's message within these walls, but has recently been translated to another, and, we trust, a better world ! Yes, the pious, the eloquent, the noble-minded, the beloved LARNED,* your brother, and companion in study, is no more ! *Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight !—* Make it your daily and hourly care, my dear young

* The Rev. SYLVESTER LARNED, late Pastor of the Presbyterian church in the city of *New-Orleans*, who, a few weeks before the delivery of this discourse, in the 24th year of his age, and in the midst of high promises of usefulness, fell a victim to a malignant fever, which was epidemick in the place of his residence. He and Mr. *Nevins* were fellow-students at the Theological Seminary, of which the Author of this Section is one of the Professors, and were much attached to each other. Mr. *Larned*, not long before his death, had been invited by the First Presbyterian church in *Baltimore* to be their Pastor ; but with a disinterestedness, as striking as it is rare, he resolved not to forsake a congregation which he had been instrumental in forming, and which he considered as still urgently needing his labours. Few young Ministers of the present day have occupied a higher place in the publick regard, or died more unforgotten and generally lamented.

Brother, to be ready to follow him ; ready to obey the summons to yourself, whenever it may arrive. *And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, may you receive a crown of glory that shall not fade away !*

In the SECOND place, let me apply the subject before us to THE MEMBERS OF THIS CONGREGATION.

You are not to imagine my friends, that the discussion in which we have been engaged, is applicable only to him who is about to become your Pastor. It has a direct, and very solemn application also, to the flock of Christ, of which he is to be an overseer. You reside in a great, rich, polished, and luxurious city ; a city which appears destined to become one of the greatest in this Western World. While this circumstance will be, as you have heard, a source of difficulty and of temptation to your Pastor, it will be a source of no less temptation to yourselves. O my friends ! such a situation is a trying, a peculiarly trying one to professing Christians. They walk every hour in the midst of contagion and of danger. *Watch and pray without ceasing*, I beseech you, against the unhallowed influence of the worldly splendours and attractions which surround you. Cherish in your persons, and in your families, those Christian virtues of moderation, simplicity, self-denial, and purity, which are so essential to social and ecclesiastical happiness. Guard against a criminal *conformity to the world*, that reproach and bane of the church of Christ.

Above all, invite the holy, sanctifying Spirit of God into your city, and into your church; and then from this great centre of life and activity, healthful influence will be pouring forth in every direction, and diffusing blessings far and wide.

You have invited this young Brother, greatly beloved and respected by his Teachers, to be your Pastor. Despise not his youth. Receive him as *an Ambassador of Jesus Christ*; for he comes in His name, and bears His message. Remember the difficulties and temptations which will await him in this wealthy capital, and add not to their number by your manner of treating him. Instead of weakening his hands, or tempting him, by any conduct on your part, to be *ashamed of the Gospel*, or to keep back, or disguise it, let your treatment of him and his ministrations be always such as to excite and animate him to greater fidelity and holy zeal. Make a point of encouraging and supporting him in the exercise of enlightened CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE. Without some good measure of DISCIPLINE, there may be a CONGREGATION; but I will venture to say, there cannot be a CHURCH. Never account him your enemy, because he tells you the truth. When he sets before you your guilt and depravity by nature; when he reminds you of your sins and your danger; when he describes to you the terrors of the judgment day, and the miseries of the damned in hell,—be not

offended. He will take no pleasure in dwelling on these things for their own sake : but only that by exhibiting your danger, he may constrain you to *flee from the wrath to come*, and to *lay hold on the Hope set before you in the Gospel*. And surely, my friends, if the danger of impenitent sinners be as great, as tremendously great, as the word of God declares it to be, that Minister who should fail to warn them, and to set before them their real situation, would deserve to be accounted their worst enemy, and to be abhorred for his want of fidelity.

When I look round on this great city, I think of *Rome*, as it was when *Paul* went thither to preach the Gospel. I think of its prosperity and grandeur in that day ; and I ask myself—Where is it now ? Alas ! its glory is departed ! Had *Rome* been faithful to its privileges, it had retained its glory to this day. But it became corrupt and corrupting ; and the righteous Governor of the world brought upon it his destroying judgments. My dearly beloved brethren, read in the history of that city, at once what will be your happiness and safety, and where your danger lies. Your happiness and safety will consist in cherishing the Gospel ; in opening your houses and your hearts, as well as your church, to its blessed influence. Your danger will lie, in rejecting that Gospel, or in turning away from its spirit and power, while you bear its name. *Behold, I set before you, this day,*

life and death, blessing and cursing : Therefore chuse life, that your souls may live. The Lord bless you and keep you ! The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you ! The Lord lift upon you the light of his countenance, and give you peace ! AMEN.

END OF THE SERMON.

THE CHARGES,



BY THE REV. ELIAS HARRISON,
OF ALEXANDRIA.

THE CHARGE TO THE PASTOR.

YOU are now, my brother, standing before this assembly, and in the presence of the great Searcher of all hearts, in circumstances the most interesting, the most solemn, and the most affecting. The great Head of the church, who watches over all its interests, and who is invisibly directing the destinies of the created universe, has this day, by an ordinance of his own appointment, selected you from the world, and invested you with the sacred office of the *ministry of reconciliation* :—an office, at once the most important, the most honourable, and the most responsible that has ever been committed into the hands of men.

From the transactions of this solemn hour, you have become a *Minister of Jesus Christ* :—a *Steward of the mysteries of God* :—an *Ambassador of the King of Zion* :—and a *Dispenser of the word of life*, to that flock, over which God in his electing providence, has made you an *overseer*. The relation into which you have now entered, and the character which from this period you are to sustain in life, are such as to awaken the liveliest interest ; and to excite in the bosoms of the friends of Zion, the most pleasing and

animating expectations. As office-bearers in the church of our Divine Master, and as co-workers with him, in the building up of his gracious kingdom in the world, we cannot help hailing this event, not only as propitious to the general interests of religion in this place ; but as an increasing evidence, that the superintending care of the great Shepherd of Israel, is still extended to every portion of his widely-scattered flock. We hail it as a token for good to *this people* who have affectionately *called* you among them to be their pastor ; to watch over their spiritual and eternal interests ; to go in and out before them, and break unto them the bread of life :—as an evidence that Zion is still enlarging her borders, and stretching forth the curtain of her habitation :—and as a pledge, a renewed pledge, that God will never forsake that church which has been so dearly bought with the blood of his only-begotten, and well-beloved Son.

But while we do this ; and while with the most affectionate cordiality we welcome you into the *ministry of reconciliation*, as one well furnished, and well qualified to sustain the sacred office ; we must inform you at the same time, as much in affection for you, as in faithfulness to ourselves, that the stand which you now occupy, is the most solemn and responsible under heaven : that it has connected with it, a *weight* of responsibility, which, without support, would be sufficient to make, even the shoulders of an

angel bend ; and which, when contemplated in its proper light by an inspired Apostle, induced him, almost in despair, to cry out, *Who is sufficient for these things ?* Are you, too, ready to sink under the prospect, and to break out in the same desponding exclamation. Let not your heart be troubled ; for He who has said, “ Go and preach the Gospel,” has also said, for your encouragement and support, “ My grace is sufficient for you.” From this moment you belong almost exclusively to the church. It has now claims upon you of such importance, and of such a binding nature, as that they can never be cancelled in any other manner, than by the withering scythe of death. Jesus Christ has commissioned, and sent you forth to preach the mysteries of his everlasting kingdom—to dispense the ordinances of his house—to watch for the salvation of immortal souls—to nourish his children with the bread of life—and both by precept and example, to be a spiritual guide to that people, the charge of whom is now committed into your hands. From henceforth, you are to know nothing among them, and to preach nothing among them, but *Jesus Christ and him crucified*. We charge you never to forget, that your *letter of instructions*, has been dictated by the inspiration of Omnipotence. “ Son of man (says God) I have set thee as a watchman to the house of Israel. Therefore thou shalt hear the word from my

mouth, and warn them from me. When I say of the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die ! if thou dost not speak, to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity ; but (mark the appalling consequence) his blood will I require at thine hands."

This then is to be your guide, in all your after ministrations. You are to search the Scriptures, and preach the whole truth, as it is in Jesus. You are not to keep back any thing, because it may not happen to suit the taste or feelings of your auditory, even though it may be disagreeable to yourself. Shun not to declare the *whole counsel* of God. With a spirit of love, of meekness, and humility, contend *earnestly* for the faith once delivered to the saints. You are to alarm the careless and secure, by the thunders of Sinai, while you sooth the desponding penitent, by pointing him to the balm of Gilead, and the glorious Physician. And these things you are to do, without being influenced by smiling favour on the one hand, or the appalling frown upon the other. Acting under the broad commission of the eternal Son of God, and having his precious promise, that he will be with you always,—giving you strength equal to your day, and even making his own strength perfect in your weakness ; you have but little cause for fearful apprehension, even though your labours should be unsuccessful :—though your message should

be rejected, and your name cast out with infamy and reproach. Whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, is to you a matter of comparatively small importance ; provided you warn them in the spirit of Christian meekness and affection. By dealing faithfully with them, that tremendous load of responsibility which now rests upon you, will be thrown off upon the heads of those by whom your message is rejected. Heaven and earth will witness for you, that if they perish, you will be free from the guilt of their blood.

In order, however, that your ministry may be successful, and that you may be cheered with the prospect of many souls, who shall be as crowns of your rejoicing in the *day of the Lord* ; let your people see, that their interests, are in a measure, identified with your own—that you indeed love them—that the salvation of their immortal souls is an object which *lies very near your heart*—that to be the happy, and honoured instrument of saving them from ruin, and of exalting them to the bliss of heaven, you are willing to deny yourself of many outward comforts :—to be instant in season, and out of season, and to do every thing for them, which the nature of your relation renders either necessary or commendable. Let the doctrines which you preach in the pulpit, be preached also in your holy and blameless manner of living. Be an example to the whole flock—in word,

in faith, in charity, in meekness, in patience, in conversation, in purity, and in whatsoever things are lovely and of good report. It is the very essence of folly, for a Minister to expect the fruits of holiness in his people, or that they will listen with edification to his preaching, unless his own walk and conversation be such as becometh the Gospel of Christ. While, therefore, you exercise the *wisdom of the serpent*, let your life be an exhibition of the *harmlessness of the dove*. Follow up the instructions given publickly in the house of God, into the families of your flock. Instruct them in the domestic circle—converse with them with freedom and familiarity ; and on all *suitable* occasions pray with them. Make this a matter of *conscience*, as frequently as the important duties of the study will leave you opportunity. For let me tell you, and I do it in some measure from successful experiment, that there is nothing, which so much endears a Pastor to his people, or a people to their Pastor, as frequently visiting, and conversing with them in their families. The union which is here formed, in this publick and official manner, is there cemented. The hearts of Minister and people, become knit together in the strongest ligaments of mutual affection : their interests seem to be *one* : they bear one another's burdens with cheerfulness—sympathise in one another's afflictions, and thus become co-workers together in helping for-

ward the interests of their common Master's kingdom.

With these remarks, we shall leave you : charging you, at the same time, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and kingdom, *preach the word : be instant in season, and out of season : reprove, exhort, rebuke, with all long-suffering, and patience. Holding fast the faithful word, as you have been taught, that you may be able to convince the gainsayers.*— And now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will : working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ : to whom be glory for ever. AMEN.

CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE.

It has also become my duty, on this solemn, and peculiarly interesting occasion, to address a few words to the members of this congregation.

My beloved Christian brethren, He who watches over the interests of his Zion, and who for this purpose, is represented as walking in the midst of his golden candlesticks, has this day given an assured evidence that he has neither forsaken, nor forgotten you. God has this day answered your petitions. From the heights of his sanctuary, upon the holy hill of Zion above, he has *beheld* the afflictions and difficulties under which you have been struggling, and has at length fulfilled your wishes, by granting you a Pastor—a Pastor, we trust, after his own heart: one who will go in and out before you, and feed you with knowledge and with understanding.

. . . . On this auspicious occasion, then, while we tender most sincerely our Christian congratulations, we would, at the same time, unite with you in devout thanksgiving to our common Lord and Saviour, for this renewed instance of his grace. It is with gratitude, as well as joy, that we hail this event as a token for great good: not only as a precious pledge of Christ's acknowledgment of you as his people; but of his continued merciful remem-

brance of this portion of his *vineyard*. *Fear not, little flock*, for the Lord will have mercy upon Zion in this city of our solemnities. We believe, my brethren, (and we rejoice in the confidence inspired by this belief) that the church in which we are now convened, has been built upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles—Jesus Christ himself being the *chief-corner* stone. We believe that God has thoughts of peace towards this church, and not of evil: that he will give it an expected end of all its troubles—water it abundantly with the dews of heaven—build it up by the mighty workings of his own Spirit—and establish it as *Mount Zion, which cannot be moved*.

In order, however, that this object may be accomplished, it must not be forgotten, that there are important duties to be discharged, as well by the members of this congregation, as by our beloved brother whom you have this day received to be your future Pastor.

That he may be successful in building up your church, in winning souls to Christ, and in edifying those who are of the household of faith, it will be necessary that you should help him forward in his work. That your liberality will keep him above the reach of temporal want, and of course unembarrassed with any secular employment, is what the Presbytery take for granted. And more than this, we believe

that you will bid him *God speed*, in all his future labours : that you will wish him success in every Christian and benevolent undertaking ; and that his publick ministrations may be followed up with an enriching blessing from above. And this, as far as it goes, is certainly all very well. But, brethren, it is not enough. Commendable as it is, something more is still wanting. There are too many in the world, I am well aware, who, after they have gone thus far ; after they have settled their Pastor,—made suitable provision for his temporal support, and comforted him with their congratulations, and general good wishes, are in the habit of supposing, that *then* they have done every thing, which, for persons in their situation, was either necessary or proper. And were nothing more expected, or desired, than the mere exercises of the pulpit, on each returning sabbath, this, perhaps, would be sufficient. But, my brethren, something more than this is expected, and something more ought to be expected. The Christian Minister, who trembles under the awful weight of responsibility, which rests upon him as an Ambassador of Jesus Christ, feels for the eternal welfare of the people of his charge. He longs for the salvation of their immortal souls : pants for seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, that the fruits of his labours may be seen in the pious and godly conversation of his flock. . . . And unless his

people stand by him—unless they hold up his hands, by their united and importunate *wrestlings* at the throne of grace—unless they give him their decided countenance and support ; and, in some measure, labour with him, he must inevitably sink under the burden. It is almost impossible that any thing else should be expected. He would find himself beating incessantly against a strong and impetuous current ; which, unless ultimately counteracted by the interposing arm of Omnipotence himself, would render all his pious and well-directed efforts completely fruitless and unavailing.

We charge you, therefore, to remember this : and while your Pastor is labouring, and praying, and striving to promote your eternal interests, give him your most unlimited countenance. Cheerfully help him forward in his arduous work, by your *actions*, as well as your wishes : give him a cordial welcome into your families : make his publick ministrations efficacious, by your united prayers : aid him by your counsel, in administering the *discipline* of the church : and make that discipline to be *respected* ; not only by a determination to see it rigidly enforced upon others ; but by cheerfully submitting to it when it is found necessary that it should be exercised upon yourselves. Without this, our book of discipline would become a mere dead letter ; and, for all the good it would produce, might as well be thrown away at once.

Give your Minister sufficient time to study ; and occasional opportunities for relaxation from the *duties* of the study. There is, I find, a very mistaken impression gone abroad in the world, with respect to this matter also. Multitudes suppose, that, as a Clergyman has but little bodily labour to undergo, therefore the life which he lives, must of necessity be a very easy one, to say the least of it ; if not a very lazy one. They seem to imagine, that he ought to be able to preach not only at any time, but at all times : and that, too, with the same appropriateness of subject—the same excellency and variety of matter—the same elegance and polish of diction—and the same animation and impressiveness of manner. And it is a fact, that he is often made the subject of severe censure and animadversion, because he will not preach more than three or four times in a week, besides attending to all his other parochial duties. If, brethren, Ministers at the present day are influenced in the same manner as the Apostles were, i. e. by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, this impression is then undoubtedly correct. If, however, it appear, that they are nothing more than *mere men* after all—prepossessed of nothing more than ordinary capacities, and capable of acquiring nothing except through the same means which are made use of for this purpose by other persons ; that is, by the most patient, laborious, and persevering exertions :—if this be true,

as it most assuredly is, the impression is not only an injurious one, but such as no person of generous feeling ought to harbour in his bosom for a single moment. I am no advocate for indolence, among any class of people : much less among the Clergy. I know that much is expected of them—much ought to be expected of them : and if they perform their duty, in reference to the account which they must at last give of the manner in which they have discharged their Stewardship, I know they will never be satisfied, without doing every thing that they *well* can do. But I must protest, and I *do*, most solemnly, against ever loading them with any burden, which they are not able to bear. Let them only be treated with the same deference to feeling, and the same regard to comfort, as other people are ; and if they are not satisfied with this, they will have nobody to blame but themselves.

If, then, my brethren, you wish your Minister to be respectable—if you expect instruction from his publick ministrations—if you desire him to present the truths of the Gospel in such a manner as to arrest, and keep up the attention—if you wish him to arouse those who are slumbering—to establish those who are wavering—to animate those who are desponding—to console those who are afflicted : and in one word, to perform his duty with fidelity to himself, and with benefit to you, we charge you, not to

lay too much upon him. Allow him always sufficient time to prepare himself beforehand : and never find fault with him for not doing, what in the nature of the case it was not possible that he *could* do. Be mutual helps and comforts to one another—forbearing one another, and forgiving one another in love. If there be any *strife* between you, let it always be who shall be most forward in advancing the interests of our Redeemer's kingdom. . . . And may the very God of peace be with you : may his blessing which maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow, ever attend you : and may that endearing relation, into which you have now entered, be a source of continued comfort—a cause of incessant gratitude ; and, to multitudes, the commencement of everlasting felicity and joy. AMEN.

THE END.



